



# Employees with COVID-19 or Exposed to COVID-19: Return to Work

The exclusion requirements below are for employees in non-high-risk settings. See [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) for the full DPH Guidelines.

## Table 1: Exclusion and Return to Work Requirements for Employees with COVID-19 (Isolation)

**Requirements for Persons with COVID-19 (Isolation)** - Everyone identified as a COVID-19 case must isolate, regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.

Infected healthcare personnel—see [Work Restrictions for HCP with COVID-19](#).

**Employee must be excluded from workplace for at least 5 days after the start of symptoms or after date of first positive test if no symptoms.**

- Isolation can end and employee may return to the workplace *after* Day 5\* ONLY if all of the following criteria are met:
  - A COVID-19 viral test\*\* collected on Day 5 or later is negative, AND
  - No fever^ for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicine, AND
  - Other symptoms are not present or are improving

--or--

- If an employee is unable or chooses not to test or if they continue to test positive on or after Day 5 isolation can end, and the employee may return to the workplace *after* Day 10\* as long as they have not had a fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medicine.
- If they do have a fever, isolation must continue, and the employee may not return to work until 24 hours after the fever resolves.

Generally, employers may determine if their employees/contractors with COVID-19 must complete the full 10 days of isolation before returning to work or if they may return to work *after* Day 5, if the criteria listed above are met. Employees/contractors are advised to obtain *information* from their employer.

**Employee must wear a highly protective mask around others** for a total of 10 days after the positive test, especially in indoor settings.

- Employers must provide—at no expense to the employee—well-fitting medical masks and well-fitting respirators (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94).
- See [Protect Yourself From COVID-19 in the Workplace: Know Your Mask Rights](#).

**Employee must follow the full isolation instructions** for people with COVID-19 at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

### Notes

\*To count the days:

- For symptomatic employees: Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms developed.
- For employees without symptoms: Day 1 is the first full day after the positive test was collected.

\*\*The test must be an [FDA-authorized](#) viral test such as an antigen or NAAT/PCR test. An antigen test is preferred. Testing must be provided by the employer free of charge and during work hours. Self-administered and self-read OTC tests are acceptable per Cal-OSHA if verification of the results, such as a time and date stamped photograph of the result or an OTC test that uses digital reporting with time and date stamped results, is provided. For more information see Cal-OSHA [Testing FAQs](#).

^A fever is a measured body temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.



# Employees with COVID-19 or Exposed to COVID-19: Return to Work

**Table 2. Requirements for Employees that are Close Contacts [Non-Outbreak Setting<sup>1</sup>]**

## **Requirements for Persons with Close Contact Exposure to Someone with COVID-19**

These requirements apply to all asymptomatic employees in non-high-risk settings that are identified as close contacts, regardless of vaccination status.

Exposed healthcare personnel—see [Work Restrictions for Asymptomatic Healthcare Personnel with Exposures](#)

Exposed employees in other high-risk settings—see [Instructions for Close Contacts-High Risk Settings](#).

**Employee must wear a highly protective mask around others** for a total of 10 days\* after their last close contact. Employers must provide—at no expense to the employee—well-fitting medical masks and well-fitting respirators (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94).

See [Protect Yourself From COVID-19 in the Workplace: Know Your Mask Rights](#).

**Employee must test\*\* within 3-5 days\*** after their last close contact with the case unless they have recently recovered from COVID-19.

- If they test positive, they must follow isolation requirements and workplace exclusions in Table 1.

## **Employee must monitor their health for 10 days\***

***If symptoms develop***, the employee must stay home and be excluded from work pending the results of a test.

- If they test positive or their doctor diagnoses them with COVID-19, they must follow isolation requirements and workplace exclusions in Table 1.
- If the employee is unable to test or chooses not to test, exclusion must continue for 10 days.
- If the employee tests negative and returns to work earlier than 10 days after the close contact, the employee must wear a highly protective mask around others for 10 days following the close contact.  
Note: CDPH recommends continuing exclusion and retesting in 1-2 days if testing negative with an antigen test, particularly if tested during the first 1-2 days of symptoms.
- For symptomatic employees who have tested positive within the previous 90 days, an antigen test is preferred.

## Notes

\*Day 1 is the first full day after their last exposure

\*\*The test must be an [FDA-authorized](#) viral test such as an antigen or NAAT/PCR test. Testing must be provided by the employer free of charge and during work hours. For more information, see Cal-OSHA [Testing FAQs](#).

